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Patriotic Poems



Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby

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Patriotic Poems

By

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Sioux Falls, S. D.

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The Poet

I've written now for years and years,
But never had the cheek
To pass them on the public,
They always seemed so weak.

One day, not long ago, a man of some renown,
Stopped at our house while he was in town.
He happened to spy something that I had wrote,
And he just laughed 'til he nearly sunk the boat.

Said he, "Dear girl, you made a mistake
Your whole life long,
If you can write poetry like that,
You can also write a song."

I picked up my pen and jabbed it in the ink,
It was a fountain pen, but I didn't even think
'Til I had written page after page,
Then I began to realize I lived in this age.

Say, don't you think it wonderful
What a little encouragement can do?
For as soon as he said my work would pass,
At my pen I flew!

Since then I have written many a verse.
Some are better, and some are worse.
I wrote it down as to my mind it came,
And I believe you would have done the same.

A poet rarely becomes great while he is alive,
But he is like the honey bee, will stick around the hive,
And after he has passed away, then will come fame,
I wonder if it is he or the people who are to blame?

Why is it that the public will never realize
That a person is ever really great, 'til after he dies?
Then they will start and sing his praise,
And always with flowers they will strew his grave.

If a few flowers were handed to him while he was here,
Don't you think to him they would be just as dear?
For many a person has passed away
When a few words of kindness their lives would stay.

Our Soldier Boys

Of our soldier boys we are mighty proud,
And in our praises for them we are always loud.
And, pray tell me, why shouldn't we be?
For there is nothing better on either side of the sea.

They are picked from every walk of life,
Some are single, while others have a wife,
To them we must ever be kind,
For they left many loved ones behind.

And many a time they long to see
Their loving wife and dear baby,
And for his return will they await,
And may they all be at the gate.

But for the boys who are in the fight
We will help them with all our might.
For our hearts with sorrow are burdened down,
Since Company B left our town.

Some of our boys will go over the top, no mistake,
For the loss of life is going to be great.
But we trust and pray they will return some day,
And their disputes in future will be settled some
other way.

I, too, have boys who are doing their part,
Far away from home, though it breaks my heart.
But I would not have them a slacker be
For anything in this world—no, not me!

Our hearts are with our boys, who now are men,
But will we ever see our darling boys again?
And many a mother's hair has turned gray
Since her soldier boy has gone away.

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

Traitors

When Germany first got into this mess
She called for her men, along with the rest
All those who hadn't their papers yet,
She wanted them home to fight, you bet.
Those that answered the call were mighty few,
They thought they would stay here to see what they could do.
Some talked too loud and in trouble got,
And then were sorry they hadn't gone and fought.

A man of that kind I think, don't you,
Had ought to be shot at a time or two
Just to make those fellows realize
That it is quality, not quantity, that we prize.
And the place for him is across the creek,
And he had better get there mighty quick.
He had better have gone while going was good,
Or I would make him swim it, if he could.

It is a long ways across that pond, you bet,
And if he has to swim it, he might get wet.
But who cares for a man of that stamp?
To think of him even, gives me a cramp.
U. S. is just the kind of a place for them to live
But when it comes to protection, they have nothing to give,
That kind of a man is just the thing
To be sure and have a poison sting.

The kind of men we want must be strong, brave, and true,
For they all have their part to do,
For if we are to win this war,
We must keep on doing more and more
For those that are in the thick of the fight,
We must help them with all our might.
For to those it means Liberty,
While to us it just means Right!

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

The Kaiser Raisehellum

This name is original with me,
And I think it fits him to a tee.
I thought 'til I nearly racked my brain
Trying to find the mutt a name.

And now I found it, I feel better,
For it surely suits him to the letter.
For the devil to him has taken off his hat,
It's a good long time since we knew that.

They say his hair is turning grey,
Don't see how it could be any other way
After all the dirt that he has done—
He ought to be dead, the son-of-a-gun.

What is he going to do to repay
The deaths he has caused in every way?
There is nothing he can do to atone,
For there is some missing from every home.

He kept them asleep for so awful long
The poor boobs didn't know what was going on.
'Til he called them to arms and started to fight,
And, of course, they thought they were doing right.

They have opened their eyes and are getting wise,
And know now he told them a lot of lies.
He hasn't yet reached Paris, that city of fame,
And London and New York were to be in the game.

Sit down, Raisehellum, while the sitting is good,
Or you may wear a night shirt of wood.
For you are about to the end of your rope,
So get ready now to take your dope.

For when the Yanks get over there,
They will fix you, Kaiser, on the square,
And make you wish you had never begun
Something you knew couldn't be done.

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

Adieu, Wilhelm

Far away, across the sea, is a country called Germany,
Where the Kaiser is crazy, and has been for years,
But his people didn't know it till he brought them to tears,
And they are at war, the bloody set,
But they are going to get a cleaning yet!
And the Kaiser will be a thing of the past,
And the people will have freedom and peace at last!

The Kaiser—Wilhelm, I believe, is his name,
But for one of his stamp, it sounds rather tame.
For we all know he is rotten to the core,
And if it wasn't in print, we might say more.
They say his arm is withered, as must be his heart,
Or he wouldn't have taken the cowardly part—
For he was prepared, as we all know,
To enter into combat with any foe.

My people are starving, but what care we?
You must not complain, but bow to me,
For I am the Imperial Wilhelm, you know,
And the seed of discontent you must not sow.
I have made up my mind to rule the land and sea,
And then the people will take notice of me.
I shall be lord of all I survey,
And my children will make the people obey.

Ah! Kaiser Wilhelm, you made a mistake,
For of this war the U. S. did partake.
We are after your scalp, and we will have it, too,
Of that you may be sure, before we are through.
Our soldiers are brave and their aim is true,
They will scatter your forces and lay low a few.
So prepare for the thrashing you are going to get,
For the U. S. hasn't even got started yet!

When we are through with you, we will let you know,
For you there isn't even a ghost of a show.
We will make our terms to suit ourselves,
And you will come to them or lay on the shelf.
And Germany then will be no more,
Who to smaller nations has been a bore.
And freedom in all that land shall be
The same as U. S. in America.

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

Men and Boys

Sometimes, when we think of men, it makes our blood rile,
Some of them should be to the front, let the boys stay home awhile,
And many a boy has gone who hasn't in high school got,
Many of them are over there, and some of them have fought.

It is a shame to take a boy who has seen so little of life,
When a man who is much older, to himself will take a wife.
He thinks then he is free from draft, that he will be exempt,
He is a piker, and the draft for such men as he was meant.

Men tell how anxious they are to get into this fight,
But they can't leave their wife, it wouldn't hardly be right.
If they were crazy to fight, they would find a way to go,
That's the way the boys do, so many of them I know.

Boys must be of age to get married without their parents' consent,
But at eighteen they can join the army, and we must be content.
While men will be talking, and tell how they would like to be in line,
When, if they wanted to, they could have been there all the time.

Our boys are all leaving us, they are going off to war,
Our country is calling and wants more and more.
My boys have gone, too, the only ones we had; but then,
It seems they would rather have boys than just have men.

It is hard to learn an old dog new tricks, some of them say,
When they want to get out of it, that is just their way.
But for the boys who go, it's easy for them to learn,
They are full of enthusiasm, and with patriotism burn.

We are expecting great deeds of our boys who are over there,
And to them we will give the credit, or it wouldn't be fair.
For when they return home, great will be our joys,
But who will carry off the honors, the men or the boys?

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

Ah! Willie

Ah, Willie, old boy, how do you feel?
It must be a coon's age since you had a meal—
I mean one that will stick to the ribs,
And calls out the napkins, as well as the bibs.

Ah! Willie, old boy, just tighten your belt,
A little thing like that will sometimes help.
For on straw bread and grass soup you won't get fat,
It's a long time now since you found out that.

Ah! Willie, what did you do with the cows that gave milk?
Also the hogs that were as slick as silk?
They would go pretty good now, wouldn't they?
But I suppose you would be satisfied if you just got whey.

Ah! Willie, the children starve and die
While their mother stands helpless by,
She, too, is as lank and as lean as a rail,
But she sees them go without a wail.

Ah! Willie, she knows their suffering and pain is o'er,
Though she will see their dear faces no more.
And thank God for what He has done,
While you stand by and think it is fun.

Ah! Willie, why did you let your head swell that way?
Did you think the sun and moon would obey?
But there is one thing about which you have no say—
And that is the good old U. S. A.

Ah! Willie, I think you have a yellow streak down your back,
And at you I am just itching to get a good crack,
And if I did, you would never come back,
But then, none of your people would wear black.
Ah! Willie.

—Rebecca Maxwell Bullesby.

Comrades

Jim and I joined the colors, both the same day,
And it was just a few hours before we were on our way
To a camp in the South, where they trained the men,
And we have been comrades ever since then.

First they sent us to Jefferson Barracks, then to Fort Worth,
Then to Fort Leavenworth, and then again up north.
Great were the sights we've seen where we've been,
For we have been comrades ever since then.

And when they left the Golden Gate for a trip across the sea,
Among the men on the boat they found Jim and me
On our way to Fort McKinley, and to camp again,
And we've been comrades ever since then.

Then we put in three long years in China and Japan,
And we swore if we got home we would never go again.
So we took the first transport that was going over the brine,
For we had been comrades all that time.

Now you will find us in France, in the thick of the fight,
I wouldn't have joined again, but I thought it wouldn't be right
For Jim to go and fight alone, with might and main,
For we had been comrades over and over again.

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

The Red Cross and Y. M. C. A.

In this war both the Red Cross and Y. M. C. A.
Are doing their part to help win the victory.
When you see an ambulance with a red cross on the side,
You may be sure they are doing good far and wide.

To the Y. M. C. A. the boys go, their letters home to write,
Their evenings are spent there nearly every night.
They are always waiting and receive them with joy,
For the Y. M. C. A. is the home of the soldier boy.

The cross is on the nurse's arm, and the doctor's over the heart,
Both of them are soldiers, doing a hero's part.
Caring for the sick and wounded certainly is an art,
But you'll find the Red Cross has been there from the start.

The Y. M. C. A. will keep them from many a strife,
While at the Red Cross they are always saving life,
For we know the home of the soldier boys, while they are away,
Is either the Red Cross or the Y. M. C. A.

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

Our Boys in France

Some of our boys are over there,
What would we not give to know just where?
And many a mother is wearing black,
For some of our boys will never come back.

They were all so kind, gentle and brave,
But we know they fill a hero's grave.
And at bed time when we say our prayer,
We think of our boys over there.

To us they write the most cherrful kind of letter,
And seem to like it better and better.
For they are in the thick of the battle,
Right where they hear the big guns rattle.

May God protect them so they will come back,
After they have given the Kaiser a crack.
For, of course, he thinks he wears the pants,
But he forgot that our boys were somewhere in France.

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

Heroes

Since the war we have been trying to find a name to fit
Our gallant soldier boys, but haven't done it yet.
Some called them Sammies and Yanks, it seems they couldn't say more,
But they will all be called Heroes after the war!

Some called them Teddies, but somehow it didn't stick,
The name sounded good to them, they didn't care a bit.
Some called them Johnnies, but that became a bore,
But they will all be called Heroes after the war!

Villa called them Stingers, he who sneaks around in the dark,
But who ever knew of a greaser to take any other part?
And there is many an I. W. W. they will have to floor,
But they will all be called Heroes after the war!

The British called them brave when they entered the fight,
The French gave them cheers, and they did just what was right.
They will win the victory, as they have done before,
And they will be called Heroes after the war!

The Kaiser called them cowards, but what do we care for that?
Before we are through with him, he will take off his hat.
The President called them Men, for they are loyal to the core,
But they will all be called Heroes after the war!

When the victory is won and they return from over the sea,
The whistles will blow and the bells will ring, what a time there will be!
We will wave the flags and sing their praise, till we can sing no more,
And they will all be called Heroes after the war!

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

After The War is Over

After the war is over, what comes then?

We will have a lot of cripples, where we once had men.

And our hearts will break with sorrow as we gaze into their face,

Then we will think of the Kaiser—was he of the human race?

Many a broken-hearted mother will gaze upon her son,

And look long and earnest, before she knows he is the one

Who left her in perfect health, a few months before,

And marched off in high spirits as he went to join the war.

Will our boys be able to see us—will they be spared their sight—

Those who have fought so nobly for freedom and for right?

And how proud of him we will be,

When he comes sailing home over the sea.

We will fold our arms around them, never let them go again,

To us they will be just boys, even if they are men.

And we will listen to the stories that they have to tell,

After the war is over, with the boys we love so well.

And we will kneel and thank God for the blessing He has brought,

For the safe return of our boys, after they have fought.

And he will lay down his arms, never more to fight,

After the war is over, with the boys who fight for Right.

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

Mother's Thoughts

Often in the wee hours of night, when we can't sleep,
We get up very quietly, and at the picture of our boys we peep.
Then we go back to bed, and shed many a tear,
For our boys who are in the army, our boys who are so dear.

Often some one will hear us weeping, and to us they will say,
"If I were you, I wouldn't feel so bad, I wouldn't cry that way."
Ah! little do they know of a mother's heart,
And the love for her boys who are doing their part.

We have loved, cared for, and watched over them so long,
It has always been our duty to see that nothing went wrong,
And now that they have gone, we miss them all the more,
For they face every danger, since they have gone to war.

Must our hearts break in silence, must we never complain?
Our boys have been taken from us, we may never see them again.
But our prayers will ever be for them, though they are over there
Our hearts will always be with them, though we don't know where.

We will write to them often, them to comfort and cheer,
We will never forget them, our boys who are so dear.
For we know they will think of us often, as they think of no others.
Because they are our boys, and we are their mothers.

And when they come back, when this cruel war is o'er,
The little mothers at home will love them more and more.
They will take us in their arms and kiss away our tears,
Our babies, our boys, our heroes, our dears!

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

Bill and Nick

Say, Nick, what is the matter with your people?
They are as lazy as so many drones;
If I was running this hell of yours
They would work, or I would break their bones!
And the way they act is certainly a fright,
Why don't you make them get out and fight?
I would like mighty well, to boss this band,
I would show them—I ruled with an iron hand!

Bill, I've been so long with my people, they are used to me.
If you were to go bossing now, what a fuss there would be!
You are all right for the Huns, and your people there,
But to come here and run things wouldn't be using them square,
My people I use with kindness and due respect,
And I think I am able to hold my job for some time yet.
But for you to come here and blow off your old bazoo—
Why don't you try and find something better to do?

That is all right, Nick, for you to be so everlasting kind;
If I was running this place those darned imps would mind!
Do you know what I do with the ones that don't obey me?
I shoot them all to pieces and throw them in the sea!
And when a rebellion starts, and I'm in time to get the hunch,
I just call out my soldiers and kill the whole darned bunch.
I thought I would give you a pointer on how this place to run:
If you take my advice you'll have a snap, also lots of fun.

Bill, the evil things you have done, you and your clique,
Brings the blush of shame to my face, and I am the Old Nick.
You can't hang around any longer, and I will give the reason:
For in no time at all you would have them all shot for treason.
You are so wicked the fire won't even scorch your hair.
It is an awful shame they ever sent you here.
You should have some respect for those that came before,
There is nothing as bad as you here, since you started this awful war.

Nick, I recognize your people here, for they once belonged to me,
Let us work hand in hand, what a change there will be.
I will make them stand around and do whatever you say,
For they will know what is coming to them, if they don't obey.

Whenever I give an order, they know that is the law,
They never stop to ask a word, or I would break their jaw!
And Nick, I will be your manager if you will just say so,
For it is this way with me: I have no other place to go.

Bill, if you should stay here it would be bad for my health,
You are such a big liar, and you work with great stealth.
When I think of your awful deeds, then I grow sick at heart,
We have got to the bend in the road, so we had better part.
My people look upon you in horror, and tell of the things you've done,
There are no crimes to equal them, nothing under the sun!
And Bill, if you will just move along, much obliged I'll be,
For you can't boss my people, I can do that myself, you see.

Nick, we ought to be friends, we can often use each other,
Let us just shake hands, and you can call me brother.
I will tell you how to get out of many a tight place,
For I have always made a study of the human race.
I can help you run the furnace, and many other things I can do,
And when you are out calling I'll run the place for you.
And Nick, if you don't care, with you I'll come and dwell,
For I rather like this home of yours, the place they all call Hell.

Bill did you think for a minute you really could stay here—
That I would let you mingle with the people I love so dear?
I have ruled this realm since the beginning of time,
And now I am not going to give up this seat of mine.
You must hunt another place for to make your home,
Don't think for a second through my place you can roam!
I have so much self-respect that with you I can't associate,
So will you please step out? I would like to close the gate!

And when Bill got outside, Nick shut the door with a slam,
If he hadn't been so darned important, I wouldn't give a damn—
But no measly Kaiser is going to tell me what I ought to do!
I think I did just right, but I will leave it all to you.
When his people first come here, they are always raising Cain—
They say I ain't up-to-date, and this place is awful tame.
When they get here, I certainly have them to drill,
I guess it is because they have always lived with Bill.

—Rebecca Maxwell Byllesby.

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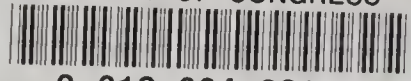
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